EDITORIAL

The happenings over the last three weeks seem to have scared the daylights out of the urban middle class, the children and the police - the latter group I believe reflected the ruling party since the ruling party has not said a word.

What has happened can be put briefly thus – a march which was intended to support the university students in Canada who have been detained by the police and face charges arising out of the Sir George William affair became or was coerced into becoming a confrontation with the government and business. Why did this happen?

The Trinidad Guardian and the Evening News those bastions of colonialism in a sea of neo colonialism have dubbed the demonstration as Black Power. No one has ever shouted Black Power, they have all shouted Power.

(This changed the meaning and interpretation conveyed by American Negroes. This accentuated the social protest in our distorted student demonstration which became a protest against the establishment. One can also say this was a cry against the overwhelming foreign investment, and the disunity created between the major racial groups as reflected in Government and opposition.

The next point is any philosophy or anything of intellectual proportions alway tends to filter down from the philosophers to the dissatisfied and other dissident elements into a cry for help and revenge. Usually leading to violence and sometimes massacre This happens all the time.

There is no need to be alarmed. Thirdly, the Williams government has been hopelessly if not woefully neglectful of the poor people in this society. Unemployment is rife and underemployment staggering. Wages are abysmally low. (There is a joke that goes like this – cane cutters cut cane for six months steal cars for six. When a man is hungry and frustrated he would do anything)

Fourthly, Williams fails to realise that he has some of the most offfensive capitalists in this country as his ministers, Montano and O'Halloran Kamal's ability to make hay while the sun shines is legendary. O'Halloran on Tuesday March 10 1970 is reported on the Guardian as saying "a move engineered by Communist Agitators trained and paid by Fidel Castro's Cuba."

After the revolution we would have recognised that the Trinidad Guardian and Evening News have done much more damage to this country than all the Black Power Demonstrations put together.

We cannot support the show of ignorance by Mr. Bhadase Maraj, who goes even further to taint and destroy the true meaning of this social protest to make it a racist dream. Mr. Maraj should recognise that in the international lexicon black means anything not white.

We of the U.N.I.P. do not however support the violence and emotionalism generated. What we say however is that this protest brings out most obviously the government failures and shortcomings after 13 years in power.

It will be a long, long time before we forget the early days of March, 1970. If we ever do. Certainly we shall be talking about the events of the last two weeks for many days yet. The beginnings seemed small and insignificant enough. A February 26 march of solidarity with the West Indian students on trial in Canada seemed to be innocuous perhaps even ordinary. And it nearly was, except that the demonstrators took it into their heads to enter the Roman Catholic cathedral and call attention to the white, 'establishment' role of the Church in a black society. That changed the perspective completely and set the stage for what subsequen-

LEADING POLITICALLY

by JAMES MILLETTE

That was before Wednesday, March 4; before, as the Express for

COMMENTARY

• BY HARRY BISNATH

Wednesday 4th March 1970 must go down as one of the most sigihificant days in the political history of Trinidad and Tobago. Beside the Water Riots of 1888; the Civil Disturbences of 1920; the Labour Marches of 1937; the demonstrations through Port-of-Spain last Wednesday proudly takes its stand.

But we must be very careful not to consign the events of last Wednesday to the history books and leave them there. For what we saw was the birth of a new movement. A movement not confined to a few dissidents but one involving the black masses of the country. And what is the ultimate aim of these masses? Their aim in general is two-fold: the assertion of black awareness and black dignity for the masses of the country; and secondly, economic liberation and true independence for the peoples of Trinidad and Tobago.

[redacted]

The formality, emptiness and the lack of meaning of constitutional independence has now been fully realised. Constitutional independence has not brought about a restructing of the economic and social relations evident in "independent" Trinidad. Indeed, these relations, well entrenched in the pre - 1956 period have further solidified. The social structure has therefore remained frozen the whites above and in control, the black masses underneath. Of course one can argue, but, is not the Government of Trinidad and Tobago a black government? And the obvious answer is readily given. But what is not so obvious is that we have here a black government in Authority but without any Power. What we mean is that the government implements decisions dictated to it by the white, and largely foreign-owned business enterprises. It is, thanks, these business interests who have the true Power. Thus our country is in the paradoxical position of having constitutional independence but being economically dependent!

[redacted]

One very significant feature of last Wednesday's march was the welding of all the oppressed black masses – particularly the Negroes and the East Indians - in a common struggle against exploitation and for freedom. This must be a very meaningful and refreshing feature for the Political Future of the country, since both political parties represented in the House have consistently exploited the two major racial groups for their success.

But how have these news-media. In general, one can say that the newspaper reporting has been relatively fair, However, one could not help but be surprised to hear T.T.T.'s "Panorama" announcer sav last Wednesday night that the march was achieved by "scores" of students." This was deliberate attempt by the Government T.V. station both to suppress information and to confuse the issue. To tell T.V. viewers that only "scores" marched, when in fact over 10,000 did so, was a determined attempt to obscure the volume of opposition which the government is facing. Again, it has always been the practice of the media to brand the university student as being irresponsible. Hence anything in which the student participates must be likewise irresponsible.

It was extremely naive of the Government – owned T.T.T to attempt to suppress information on the side walks. Could anyone really attempt to suppress 30,000 people? Incidentally, Radio Trinidad made no mention of the march in the popular 7.45 p.m. newscast that night! Imagine, over 30,000 persons involved in a demonstration and that is not considered to be news!

[redacted]

The silence of the government concerning Wednesday's and subsequent marches, have been matched only by the silence of the editorial columns of the Trinidad Guardian. But this is hardly surprising since they usually work hand in hand. Over 30,000 persons are involved in a demonstration and the Guardian on the following day digresses into an editorial of "Deep Sea Fishing". Thousands continue to demonstrate and the same paper tells us of "Bank Loans" and a meaningless "Conciliation Centre." Such are the virtues of a responsible newspaper!

The Black Power demonstration obscured, but made no less significant another item in the news, and another example of local news "reporting".

Last Monday the Prime Minister was carded to open an international agricultural seminar at St. Augustine and to deliver the feature address. The P.M. did not come to St. Augustine on that day.

HISTORIC WEEK?

[redacted]

On its 12.30 p.m newscast Radio Trinidad told its listenners that Dr. Williams did not attend the opening of the seminar because of a planned demonstration by the students there T.T.T. told viewers that night that Dr. Williams, having to attend an emergency Cabinet meeting, had to forego the opening of the seminar. On the following day the Trinidad Guardian made a deliberate attempt to confuse the issue with its front page story headline: "PM sees ECM as major threat to agriculture in the WI". It reported the Prime Minister's address to the seminar, at length, in an obvious attempt to convey the impression that he spoke at the seminar! It is only way down in paragraph seven that we realise that this address was read by Dr. K. Julien, and that in fact the P.M. was really absent! Significantly, too, no mention was made of a planned demonstration awaiting the "Doc"!

It is quite plain why Dr. Williams did not attend the seminar. Collectively and individually the government is now facing more determined and organised opposition than they have ever met in their thirteen years in office. What ever little "image" Kamal and Montano had is now irretrievably lost. O'Halloran never had any image, so he does not have anything to lose! The P.M. too nust now preserve the little bit if any, that he has. Student demonstrations would only make a bad situation worse. Thus he took the coward's way – he stayed home! This act of course made the P.M lose even more "face." for by last Monday afternoon it was not only the St. Augustine campus that was aware that the P.M had taken the coward's way out!

[redacted]

But the official excuse of his absence from the seminar was most amusing. The two-hour "emergency" Cabinet meeting, supposed called at the same time as the opening of the seminar was "to deal with an important foreign affairs matter which could have far-reaching effects on the national scene"!! Who is the government trying to fool? We all know that neither a two-hour nor a two hundred hour Cabinet meeting can make any of our foreign policy decisions All our foreign policy decisions are dictated to us from Washington and London! But anyway that is another story